

# MR CHICK

HIS TRAVELS AND  
ADVENTURES



BY  
LUCY FITCH PERKINS




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# MR. CHICK

His Travels and Adventures

NARRATED AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
LUCY FITCH PERKINS



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TO MRS. EDWARD MACDOWELL  
his earliest friend  
Mr. Chick presents his  
grateful compliments.

## Here are pictures of the people in this Story

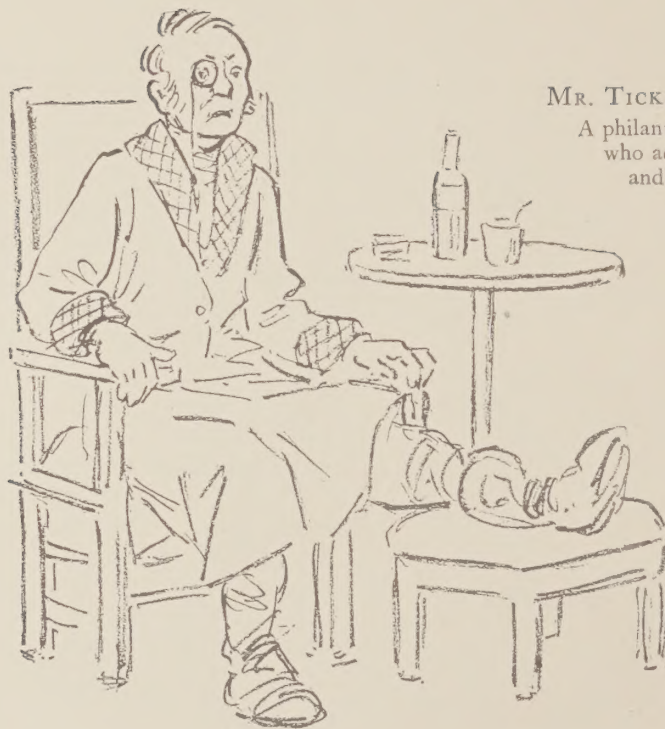
- MR. CHICK: An Orphan Artist.  
(He makes toys and plays the fiddle.)
- MR. TICKLE: A Philanthropist.  
(He adopts orphans and has gout.)
- DR. SNIPES: A man of Science who believes in Efficiency.  
(He is in his study thinking up a new disease and must not be disturbed.)
- BOY ORPHANS: Adopted by Mr. Tickle.
- GIRL ORPHANS: Adopted by Mr. Tickle.
- MRS. PULLET: An Orphan Cook with no one to cook for.
- MRS. BUMBLE: Once Mr. Chick's Landlady.  
(Neat and *very* thrifty.)
- MISS WILLOW: Dr. Snipes's Trained Nurse.  
(Very professional.)
- and
- SOLOMON: Mr. Chick's Dog.  
(Called Solomon because he is so wise.)



MR. CHICK

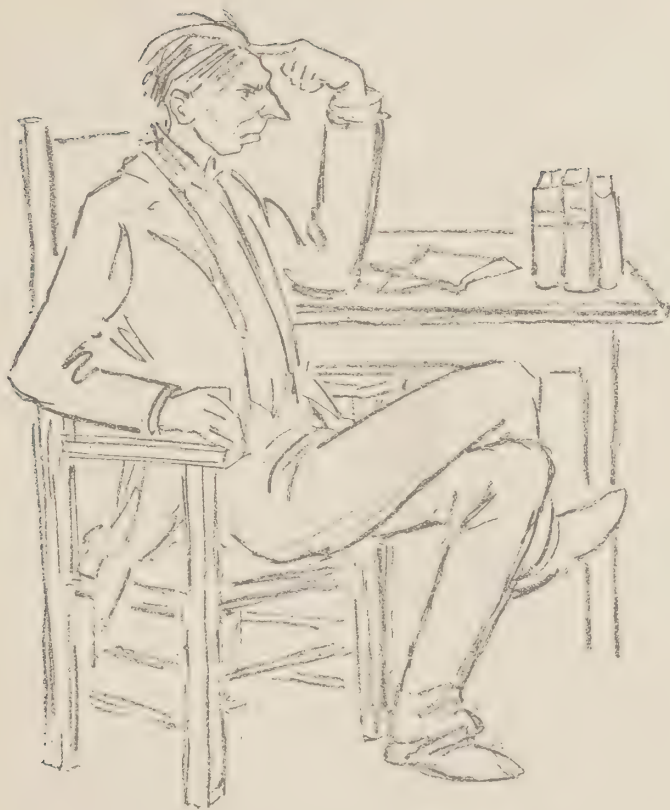
An orphan artist who makes  
toys and plays the fiddle.





MR. TICKLE

A philanthropist  
who adopts orphans  
and has gout.



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A man of Science who believes in Efficiency. (He is in his study thinking up a new disease and must not be disturbed.)

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(Adopted by Mr. Tickle.)





GIRL ORPHANS  
(Adopted by Mr. Tickle.)



**THE WIDOW BUMBLE**  
Once Mr. Chick's landlady.  
She is neat and *very* thrifty.



**MISS WILLOW**  
Dr. Snipes's trained nurse  
(very professional).



**MRS. PULLET**  
An orphan cook with  
no one to cook for.



MR. CHICK  
His Travels and Adventures

# MR. CHICK

## His Travels and Adventures

ONE day of the world Mr. Chick woke up, put his spectacles on his nose, and took a look at the sky. 'A good day for traveling the road,' he said to himself. He had to say it to himself because he had no one else to say it to except his dog, whose name was Solomon because he was so wise. Solomon put his paw on Mr. Chick's knee.

'A fine day for me to be stepping out to seek my fortune, it would be,' said Mr. Chick to him. 'Here I've made toys for all the little children in this village, and played the fiddle for them to dance until they have all grown up and flown away like young birds from their nests. A town of grown folks alone is no place to live at all. There are spots in the world, I make no doubt, where there are children who would relish a toy and a bit of a jig now and again, and 'twould be a pity indeed if we could not find them.'



‘You see, Solomon,’ said Mr. Chick, ‘how can I make toys if there are no children to play with them? How can I play the fiddle if there is no one to dance? Besides, it would be a pleasant thing to see the world.’

Solomon pricked up his ears, wagged his tail, and looked so pleased with the idea that Mr. Chick immediately packed his fiddle in a bundle with his clothes, filled a basket with toys, and then, locking the door behind him, slung his bundle on a stick over his shoulder and set forth at once on his travels with Solomon by his side.

All day they walked steadily along by fields and farms and through forests, until at sundown, just as Mr. Chick was wondering where he and Solomon could sleep, they came upon a sign beside a gate. Mr. Chick read it aloud to Solomon.

‘It says, “Mrs. Bumble, Entertainment for Man and Beast. Walk in.” If you will overlook being called a Beast, we will do so,’ said Mr. Chick, as he opened the gate.



The Widow Bumble had just come out to sweep her doorstep when Mr. Chick and Solomon came. She always swept her doorstep twice every day, though it was never dirty because she never had any visitors.

‘Are you a peddler?’ said the Widow to Mr. Chick, looking suspiciously at his bundle.

‘No, ma’am,’ said Mr. Chick. ‘I am an Orphan Artist. This is my dog, Solomon.’ Solomon lifted his paw politely to shake hands, but Mrs. Bumble did not notice him.

‘What have you in your basket?’ asked Mrs. Bumble.

‘Toys,’ said Mr. Chick. ‘I make toys for children and play the fiddle.’

‘Humph!’ said Mrs. Bumble.



Mr. Chick took out a jumping jack and showed it to her.

'Is there money in them things?' said Mrs. Bumble.

'Certainly, ma'am, certainly,' said Mr. Chick.

'Then you can pay your bills?' said Mrs. Bumble.

'Certainly, ma'am, certainly,' said Mr. Chick.

'Then you may come in.'

She led the way to the back door. It opened into a shed where there was a neat woodpile.

'Sit here in the woodshed,' said Mrs. Bumble (she did not even say please). 'I will get you some supper, but I won't have you tracking up my kitchen floor. And that dog can't come in at all.'

'But your sign said Entertainment for Man and Beast,' faltered Mr. Chick. 'Solomon is not really a beast. He goes everywhere that I do.'



'Then you'll stay where he stays,' said Mrs. Bumble. 'You can have your supper out here and sleep in the barn.'

'Very well, ma'am,' said Mr. Chick. Solomon said nothing.

'This does not look promising to me,' said Mr. Chick to Solomon, when Mrs. Bumble had gone to get their supper. 'The sign said, "Mrs. Bumble, Entertainment for Man and Beast." I do not find Mrs. Bumble entertaining, to be sure, but perhaps there are children in the village beyond who would like my toys, and I could have a cozy little shop in the barn.'

Solomon kept on saying nothing, and he looked very doubtful.

They waited a long time, but at last Mrs. Bumble brought their supper. Solomon swallowed his in two bites, then he sat up politely opposite Mr. Chick, looking more cheerful. Mr. Chick looked more cheerful too.

'This is really not so bad, after all,' said Mr. Chick as he munched a chicken bone. 'The old girl can cook. This is a good supper. Maybe her bark is worse than her bite.'

Solomon still said nothing, but he growled when Mrs. Bumble came out to get the dishes.



Mr. Chick and Solomon slept all that night in the hay, and the next morning he set up his little shop in Mrs. Bumble's barn, and began to work. He whistled as he worked. A rooster and a hen came in and pecked about the floor, and friendly mice ran about on the shelves.

'I think we shall do very well here as soon as the children see these,' said Mr. Chick to Solomon as he put the finishing touches on a large jumping jack. 'They should be coming by from school pretty soon.'

But no children passed by. No children ever passed by Mrs. Bumble's door if they could help it. Solomon and Mr. Chick ate their dinner in the woodshed and watched through the window every minute, but not a single child did they see. Then they went back to the barn. Solomon's tail was between his legs, and his ears drooped, and Mr. Chick himself felt as if he had been born an orphan, so he took his fiddle out of his pack and sat down on a box.



‘Solomon,’ he said, ‘this will never do. We must not be down-hearted. Let us be jolly!’ and he began to play such a lively tune that Solomon sat up on his hind legs and grinned.

The rooster and the hen heard it and came running in to see what was going on. Two little mice crept close to the box and listened. Mr. Chick beat with his foot on the floor and wagged his head in time to the music, and Solomon applauded with his tail.

They were all feeling quite cheerful again, when suddenly they heard footsteps. Mrs. Bumble was coming!



Solomon instantly hid under the steps, and Mr. Chick hastily retired to the barn loft, but not hastily enough.

‘What bedlam is this? I will not have that fiddle squalling in my barn!’ cried Mrs. Bumble, as she bounced in at the door. ‘The neighbors might think it was *me* making that noise!’

Then she bounced out again, stamped back into her kitchen and banged the door behind her. Mr. Chick hung up his fiddle and went back to his workbench and sat down. Solomon came and sat down beside him.

‘Noise!’ groaned Mr. Chick aloud, smiting his brow. ‘Noise! That woman called my music *noise*! She has no soul for Art! Why, sometimes I have been *paid* to make that noise, and she got it for nothing! She knows no more about Art than a—than a Critic! Oh, why must an Artist live in such a world!’

Solomon thumped his tail on the floor and howled for sympathy. He had never approved of Mrs. Bumble.



At three o'clock in the morning, when all the world was asleep, Mr. Chick took the basket with the toys and the bundle with his fiddle in it and crawled quietly out of the window of the barn, leaving money for his board and Solomon's on his work-bench. **Solomon was waiting for him outside.**

They crept quietly past Mrs. Bumble's kitchen window, and, keeping in the shadow of the barn, at last reached the gate, closed it behind them, and were out on the highroad once more. Mr. Chick breathed a sigh of relief as they stepped forward in the moonlight and passed out of sight of Mrs. Bumble's house.

Sunrise found them far on their way to Somewhere Else, which was where they meant to go in the first place. The little birds were singing and flying about, and everything was so peaceful and happy that soon Mr. Chick and Solomon both forgot all about Mrs. Bumble and were happy too.

'How beautiful is nature!' said Mr. Chick. He hummed a tune to himself as he walked along.



On and on they went. The sun climbed higher and higher. The basket and the bundle grew heavier and heavier. Solomon's tail drooped again. Finally Mr. Chick stopped in the road, frowned, and put his finger to his brow.

'It seems to me I have forgotten something,' he said aloud. 'What can it be?' He looked at Solomon. He felt in his pockets. He looked at the sky, and back at the road. It was very puzzling.

'Ah — I have it!' he cried at last. 'It is breakfast! How very extraordinary! I never thought of it until this moment.'

And then, as there wasn't any breakfast to be had, he sat down beside the road, took out his fiddle, and played such a lively tune that he and Solomon forgot all about breakfast again. A little bird sang on a branch above his head, and two rabbits came right out of the bushes and sat upon their hind legs to listen.



When they were quite rested, they walked on again, and soon they came to a little old house beside the road. A little old woman came out of it.

‘I heard you playin’ down the road,’ said the old woman. ‘I’d the foot of the world on me in me young days and I feel the life stirrin’ in me still. Let you set up a tune now, and I’ll shake a leg to it, and after I’ll get you a bite and a cup o’ tea to keep it company, for you must be fine and hungry the way you are walking the world.’

‘You’ve the foot of the world on you still, I make no doubt,’ said Mr. Chick politely, and he sat down at once on a stone before the door and struck up ‘Money Musk.’

The little old woman picked up her skirts and danced until she was out of breath, while Solomon sniffed about the doorstone to see if there was a prospect of breakfast for him too.

Then the old woman went into her little house and they heard the rattle of dishes, and smelled a wonderful smell of bacon cooking. Soon she brought out her bread and bacon and a cup of tea for Mr. Chick, and a fine bone for Solomon.



‘And where might yourself be going this fine morning?’ said the old woman as she brought Mr. Chick a little cakeen and poured him a second cup of tea.

‘I’m an Artist,’ said Mr. Chick. ‘And an Orphan. And I’m walking the world searching for children to make toys for.’

‘Lawk-a-mercy-me, but you’re on the right road for that!’ cried the old woman.

‘Down the hill a piece there’s Mr. Tickle living, and him with orphans enough to set up the world with children, and not one of them seein’ a toy since the world began.’

‘But why have they had no toys?’ said Mr. Chick.

‘You’ll find out soon enough,’ said the old woman. ‘Let you be leppin’ along now, the sooner to get there.’



‘And listen to this now,’ she added, as Mr. Chick and Solomon set forth on their travels again. ‘I’m an orphan meself, and a cook, and it’s queer and lonesome with neither chick nor child to cook for, I’m tellin’ you, so if ever you’re feelin’ a bit lonesome, step by and I’ll wet a cup of tea for ye.’

‘Thank you, ma’am, indeed,’ said Mr. Chick. Then to himself he said, as he walked along, ‘Whatever did she mean by neither *Chick* nor Child?’

He stepped briskly away down the road humming ‘Money Musk’ as he went.



A mile or more beyond Mrs. Pullet's house Mr. Chick saw two little girls sitting on a stone by the roadside.

'Bless my soul!' said Mr. Chick to himself. 'Two of Mr. Tickle's orphans, as like as not. I'll just pass the time of day with them.' So he said, 'Good-morning! Whose children are you?'

'We are two of Mr. Tickle's orphans,' they said.

'Bless my soul!' said Mr. Chick, 'now *are* you? What might your names be?'

'We haven't any names at all,' said the orphans, 'only numbers. Dr. Snipes won't let Mr. Tickle name us. He says it isn't systematic, and numbers save time. We are Six and Eight.'

'Bless my soul!' said Mr. Chick, 'how very extraordinary!'



Mr. Chick sat right down on another stone opposite Six and Eight and rummaged about in his basket. He took out a doll and a jumping jack.

‘Oh — Oh!’ cried Six and Eight, ‘what are those things?’

‘Toys,’ said Mr. Chick.

‘Oh!’ cried Six and Eight, ‘we never have any toys. Dr. Snipes says they are a waste of time!’

‘Bless my soul!’ said Mr. Chick, ‘how *very* extraordinary!’ Then he said, ‘I will not call you Six and Eight. I shall call you Amaryllis and Christobel!’

‘Oh, *will* you?’ cried the orphans.



Then Mr. Chick took out his fiddle. 'When I feel like an orphan,' he said, 'I always play my fiddle and forget it.' He played such a lively tune that Amaryllis and Christobel forgot to feel like orphans too. Amaryllis danced with the jumping jack, and Christobel hugged the doll.

Then all of a sudden a bell rang, and they were Six and Eight again!

'Oh, dear, we shall be late for Dr. Snipes!' cried Six. 'He comes to tell us what is the matter with us every Saturday afternoon.'

They kissed the doll and the jumping jack, and Eight almost kissed Mr. Chick too, but stopped herself just in time. 'Dr. Snipes says kisses are not sanitary!' she said, then they ran up the road toward the bell as fast as they could go.



Mr. Chick shouldered his pack and walked on. Soon he passed by more orphans, Numbers Seven and Nine, who don't care what they do!

'Look at the old geezer!' cried Nine, pointing with his finger. Seven ran out his tongue!

'Bless my soul!' said Mr. Chick, 'how very extraordinary!'

Then he turned round and said politely, 'Good-morning, girls.'



‘Girls!’ screamed Seven and Nine. ‘*Girls!* We’ll show you if we are girls!’

Solomon dropped the basket he had been carrying and growled.

‘Bless my soul!’ cried Mr. Chick, picking up the basket. ‘How was I to tell? You are dressed just like some girls I met a way back!’

‘It’s Dr. Snipes. He makes us,’ howled Seven. ‘He says it’s more systematic, and saves time sorting clothes. Oh, the viper — oh, the — the —’



But before they could think of anything bad enough to call Dr. Snipes, Mr. Chick whipped out his fiddle and played 'Money Musk' with all his might and main. The tune got right into the legs of Seven and Nine, and before they knew it they were dancing like the jumping jack himself! Solomon sat down on his haunches and smiled.

Then the bell rang again.

'It's Dr. Snipes,' howled Seven and Nine, and they ran away as if the dogs were after them, shaking their fists all the way.



'And what may you be?' asked Mr. Chick when a little farther on he came upon One, Two, and Four beside the road.

'If you pleathe, thir,' said Four, 'we are sthtummuck-aches. We have to wait for Dr. Thnipthes to get through with the otherth. Did you ever have sthtummuck-aches, Mithter?'

'Often,' said Mr. Chick. 'And worse aches than that!'

'There aren't any worse aches,' groaned One.

'Oh, there comes the doctor,' screamed Two. 'Run like everything!'

In an instant all the Stomach-Aches were out of sight.

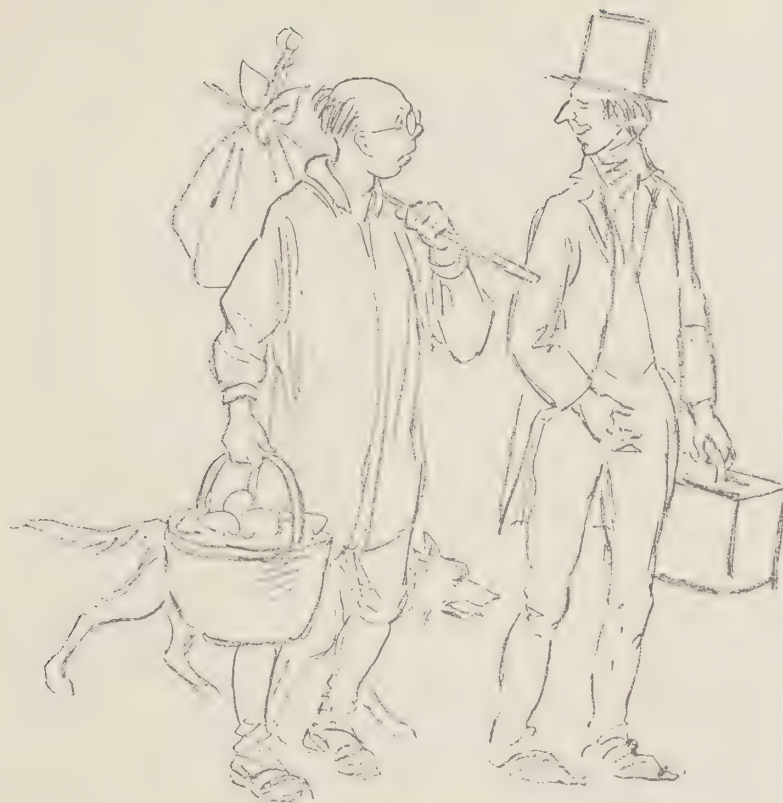


At last Mr. Chick met Dr. Snipes himself, with his medicine case, going to Mr. Tickle's.

'Dr. Snipes, I believe,' said Mr. Chick. 'I have heard of you.'

'Ah, yes, yes,' said Dr. Snipes, looking much pleased. 'My name is not unknown professionally if I may say so. I am a Man of Science; I believe in Efficiency. Never waste a word or a motion, that's my motto. Time, sir, time is money, if I may coin a phrase.'

'So I have heard,' said Mr. Chick.



‘Ah,’ said Dr. Snipes, ‘I see you have a taste for Science and Efficiency yourself, my dear sir. You have followed my reputation so closely.’

Here he set down his medicine case. ‘Never waste a word or a moment! That’s my idea. That’s what I say to my friend Tickle. A worthy man — a well-meaning man, a benevolent man, I may say is Mr. Tickle, but oh, my dear Mr. — Mr. —’

‘Chick,’ said Mr. Chick.

‘Chick,’ said Dr. Snipes. ‘Just so. Well, as I was saying, my friend Tickle means well, but oh, my dear sir, how inefficient! How vague! How impressionable! His parents thought to make an artist of him because of general incapacity for business, but as he has plenty of money he became a philanthropist instead. Fortunately he has Me. Without Me I do not know what would become of the orphans. I really don’t. I am bringing order out of chaos, if I may coin a phrase. I am reducing every one and everything to a system.’

‘So I have heard,’ said Mr. Chick.



'Now, my dear Chick,' said Dr. Snipes, 'I can see at a glance that you are a man of great intelligence. You will appreciate what I am doing here. Mr. Tickle merely pays the bills. The System is all my own. Come in and meet Tickle.'

'But,' said Mr. Chick, 'maybe Mr. Tickle would not care to meet me.'

'Nonsense, my dear Chick. Nonsense. Tickle is always honored to meet any friend of mine. A friend indeed is a friend in need, if I may coin a phrase. You understand me, therefore you are my friend. Come along.'

He took Mr. Chick firmly by the arm. Solomon looked worried, but he walked faithfully beside his master carrying the basket in his mouth.



Mr. Chick left Solomon outside with the basket and the pack and went in to Mr. Tickle's room with Dr. Snipes.

'Ah, my dear Tickle,' said Dr. Snipes, 'permit me to introduce my friend Chick. Mr. Tickle, Mr. Chick! Mr. Chick has, if I may say so, shown great interest in my ideas. He has heard much of me as a man of Science.'

'Ah,' said Mr. Tickle, 'and what are you, my good man?'

'An orphan, sir,' said Mr. Chick, bowing. 'And an artist.'

'Ah,' said Mr. Tickle, beginning at once to feel benevolent. 'In that case, by all means. Just so.'

'Thank you, sir,' said Mr. Chick.

'A word with you in private, if you please, my dear Tickle,' said Dr. Snipes. 'Mr. Chick will wait outside, I am sure.'

'To be sure, to be sure, to be sure,' said Mr. Chick. He went out and sat down in a chair beside Solomon.



‘Now, my dear Tickle,’ said Dr. Snipes when they were alone, ‘I see you have something in your mind.’

‘How did you know it?’ said Mr. Tickle.

‘My dear sir,’ said Dr. Snipes, ‘you couldn’t possibly have anything in your mind without my noticing it.’

‘Ah-hum. Just so,’ sighed Mr. Tickle. He thought a moment. Then he said, ‘It’s my orphans! Alas! I fear I was never meant for a Mother. I cannot seem to give them a Mother’s care. I do my best, but —’

Dr. Snipes interrupted him. ‘Nonsense, my dear Tickle,’ said he. ‘Mothers are a poor makeshift. They have no scientific knowledge and very little system. In fact, as a class we must admit they are lamentably inefficient. Mere amateurs as it were. A little more system, my dear Tickle, is what you need. With system you could distance them all.’

‘But,’ said Mr. Tickle, ‘I have gout. How can I have system too?’

‘How do you know it is gout?’ said Dr. Snipes sternly.

‘It feels like it,’ said Mr. Tickle.



'But, my dear sir,' said Dr. Snipes, 'how can you be sure it *is* gout until you have gone systematically through all the other diseases and know it is *not* any one of them? The scientific way would be to take them alphabetically, as for example, Astigmatism, Asthma, Boils, Catalepsy, Delirium, Eczema, down through Lockjaw, Ringworm, Tetanus, Ulcer, Varicose Veins, etc., clear to xyz. Then, my dear sir, and not before, you would have a scientific knowledge of what it *isn't*, which is the first step to finding out what it *is*. Any other method is mere guesswork. Science, my dear Mr. Tickle, Science!'

'But,' said Mr. Tickle, 'will that cure it?'

'Ah,' said Dr. Snipes, shaking his finger at him, 'then comes the next step. Let us by all means be orderly! Then we will go to the hospital, and have you X-rayed, and Floroscoped, and Horoscoped, and Stethoscoped, and Telescoped, and perhaps an Exploratory Operation, and by that time, we should be pretty sure of what it *isn't*. Then we will have a Consultation of the Specialists in these different branches.



'Oh,' cried Mr. Tickle, 'I think I will not trouble you to do so *much* for me, Dr. Snipes! I feel better already! *Much* better! In fact I feel quite well.'

'No,' said Dr. Snipes firmly, 'you are not well! How can you be when you have not been cured? A little logic, Mr. Tickle, now, really!'

'But – I protest,' gasped Mr. Tickle, knocking over his footstool.

'Don't you leave your chair, Mr. Tickle,' said Dr. Snipes firmly. 'You are a sick man! Now be perfectly easy in your mind! I will take charge of everything and put this orphanage on a systematic basis. I am going to get this man Chick to help me. As soon as we have everything in perfect order, I will take you to the hospital and perform all the operations necessary. Meanwhile I will leave a bottle of medicine, for in a case like yours delays are dangerous, if I may coin a phrase. Now just rest easy while I see my friend Chick.'

Mr. Tickle merely groaned. He did not say a word.



'I have a great surprise for you,' said Dr. Snipes when he saw Mr. Chick again. 'You are going to stay here and have the privilege of working with me. Mr. Tickle will pay the bills, but I shall direct you.'

'But—my Art!' cried Mr. Chick. 'I make toys and play the fiddle, you know!'

'Nonsense, my dear Chick,' said Dr. Snipes. 'I cannot take no for an answer. What is Art compared to Science, anyway? Come with me at once and I will introduce you to my System.'

Mr. Chick did not know what else to do, so he left Solomon to guard his pack and followed Dr. Snipes.



They went into the room where the orphans were.

'Now,' said Dr. Snipes, 'watch me! You are going to see some Efficiency, believe me!'

'I do,' said Mr. Chick.

'Ah, I thought I could rely upon you,' said Dr. Snipes as he put a round reflector on his brow and took a magnifying glass in his hand.

'Now, Orphans, attention! Form in line on my right. Step lively, and as you pass, look me right in the eye.'

He put spectacles on each one as they passed by.

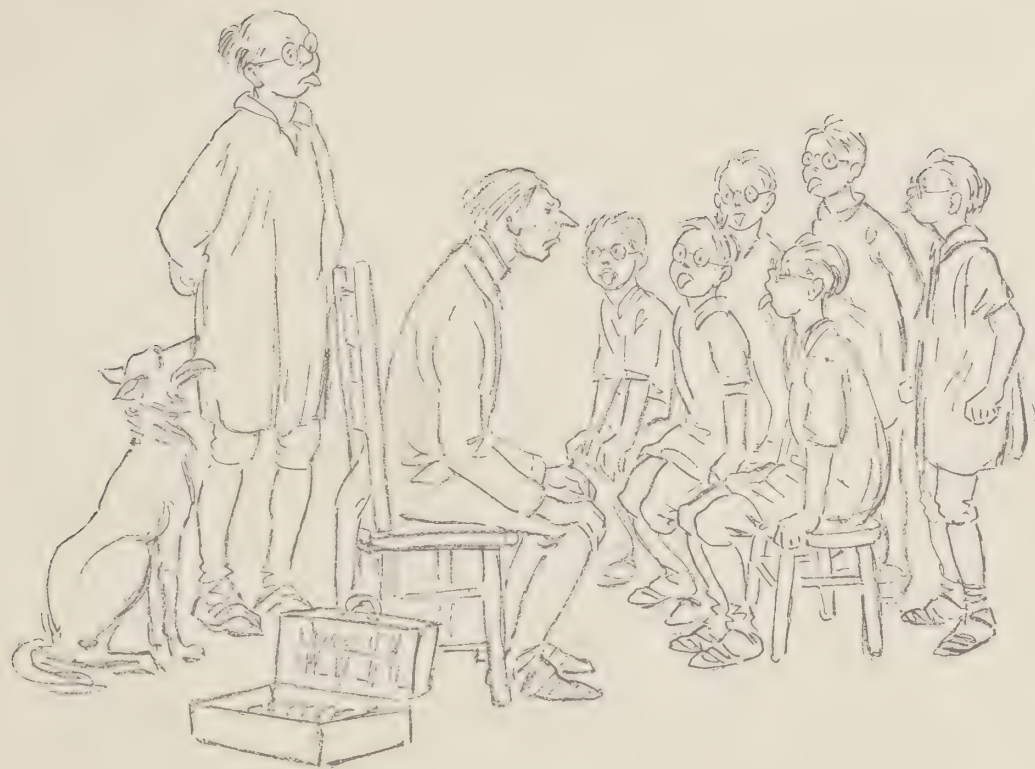
'The human eye, unassisted, is a very inefficient organ,' he said to Mr. Chick. 'They must all wear glasses sometime, why not now? Do it now, that is always my motto, if I may coin a phrase.'



'Ah,' said Dr. Snipes, rubbing his hands cheerfully when the spectacles were all gone, 'now we will examine tongues. All the big children step forward, and when I say *three* stick out your tongues. Now, one, two, three —'

They all obeyed, even Mr. Chick and Solomon, who had come in to find his master.

Seven obeyed with great enthusiasm.



When they had all shown their tongues, Dr. Snipes said, 'Now do not close your mouths. I will look at your tonsils at the same time.' Then to Mr. Chick he said, 'You see, sir, I make every moment count. Efficiency! While their mouths are already open, I examine the tonsils, thus killing two birds with one stone, if I may coin a phrase.'

Then to the orphans he said, 'Say Ah— ah—!'

'Ah-h-h-h—' said the orphans in unison.

'Keep on saying it,' said Dr. Snipes. They kept on saying it. Then he said, 'Ah— um. Some day, I see, I shall have to remove all your tonsils, and perhaps your teeth.'

'Ah — ah — a-a-ah — ' howled the orphans.

'You may shut your mouths,' said Dr. Snipes. 'And now, are there any classified disorders? If so, hold up your hands.'

'If you pleathe, thir,' said Number Four, holding up her hand, 'we are Sthtum-muck-Aches.' Dr. Snipes looked at them.

'Two tablespoons of castor oil each,' he said.

'O, thir! If you pleathe, may we keep our sthtummuck-aches? We'd *rather!*' cried Number Four.

'No, indeed,' said Dr. Snipes.



He looked sternly at the rest of the orphans who were all trying to get behind one another on the opposite side of the room; then he said, 'Prevention is better than cure, if I may coin a phrase — two tablespoons of castor oil all round!'

'Ow-ow' — howled the orphans.

'Now, Chick,' said Dr. Snipes briskly, 'lend me a hand with these Stomach-Aches. You hold the bottle while I give the dose.' But there was no answer. Mr. Chick had left the room.



'Now,' said Dr. Snipes, when the Stomach-Aches and the other orphans had all been attended to. 'Let us see about hair! Hair is unsanitary and should not be encouraged on orphans. Besides, it takes time to care for it. An operation is indicated. Let us do it now.'

He sent at once for a trained nurse in a white apron and a cap. 'I must have a nurse **I** am used to,' said Dr. Snipes.

Then he put on a white smock and stood the orphans up in a row. The nurse sterilized his rubber gloves, boiled the scissors, and stood beside him with a tray while he clapped a large bowl over the head of each orphan in turn, and cut off the hair around the edge.



'Now,' said Dr. Snipes to Mr. Chick as the orphans filed past him afterward for inspection, 'that is really something like! Not perfect, of course, but we are making progress. We are getting down to System and Efficiency. Here they are all dressed alike, all with their hair nicely trimmed, and all with spectacles on their noses, and castor oil inside them. If only they were all the same size now, it would be quite ideal. Order, sir, order is Heaven's first law, if I may coin a phrase.'

'Oh, isn't Dr. Snipes just *wonderful?*' said the trained nurse to Mr. Chick in a loud whisper.

'Extraordinary!' said Mr. Chick.



‘Now, my dear Chick,’ said Dr. Snipes as he and the trained nurse took their leave. ‘This is enough for to-day, I think. I have just been in to see Tickle. I will tell you in confidence that the cook has left. I am sure you will get along very well, however, now that I have got things on a more systematic basis here. The cook was an ignorant person who had no sense of System. You are doubtless better off without her.’

‘B — b — but —’ stammered Mr. Chick, ‘who will do the cooking? Could the nurse stay and help us?’

‘Not at all — not at all,’ said Dr. Snipes, ‘most unprofessional. Nurses are for nursing, not cooking. Possibly I may drop in sometime during the week in case you need advice.’

And before Mr. Chick could say another word, they were gone. The orphans had already scuttled out of sight. Mr. Chick was alone.



When they were out of sight, too, Mr. Chick sat down, smote his brow, tore his hair, and complained to Solomon.

‘Alas,’ said he,

‘Alas, alack, and well-a-day! I thought to end all trouble,

But here instead of feeling gay, I see my trouble double.

Was ever a poor orphan man put in such a pickle?

I’ve jumped from out the frying-pan into the house of Tickle!

I thought life bad and sad and rough in the house of Widow Bumble,

But this here luck is tough enough to make an angel grumble.

Ten helpless orphans, — count them, — *ten*, and none to help or hinder!

I’ve half a dozen minds again to jump out of the winder.’

Then he paused, stopped tearing his hair, and said to Solomon, ‘Why, that was poetry!’ He looked surprised and pleased, Solomon looked surprised.

‘Ah, Solomon, what a comfort in affliction is Art!’ said Mr. Chick. Then he took his fiddle out of his pack and began to play ‘The Heart Bowed Down.’



Mr. Chick had just finished the last strains of 'The Heart Bowed Down' when a bell rang violently.

'Good gracious me!' said Mr. Chick. 'Whatever can that be?' Then, as there was no one else to answer him, he answered himself. 'It's a bell,' he said.

The bell rang again.

'Good gracious me!' said Mr. Chick. 'I believe it's Mr. Tickle. Perhaps he wants something.' He rapped at Mr. Tickle's door.

'Come in,' said a voice.

Mr. Chick went in. There sat Mr. Tickle just where Dr. Snipes had left him.



Mr. Tickle seemed excited.

‘What was that infernal noise?’ he said to Mr. Chick.

‘What noise, sir?’ said Mr. Chick. ‘I didn’t hear any noise.’

‘Didn’t hear it?’ said Mr. Tickle. ‘Are you deaf?’

‘Oh, no, sir,’ said Mr. Chick, holding his fiddle behind him.

‘It sounded,’ said Mr. Tickle, ‘like a cat on a fence! I am very sensitive to sound.

It made me weep.’

‘Could it have been me, sir?’ said Mr. Chick, wiping the sweat from his brow. ‘I was practicing my Art. You see, sir, an Artist must express his soul.’



‘Ah! Yes, yes, to be sure,’ murmured Mr. Tickle.

‘But does your soul often feel the way that sounds?’

‘Oh, dear, no,’ said Mr. Chick. ‘That’s only my Misery Melody. I was feeling very sad just now, but I burst into poetry and song and I feel quite cheerful again.’

‘Do you burst into poetry too?’ asked Mr. Tickle.

‘A little, sir,’ said Mr. Chick modestly. ‘In fact, sir, if I may make so bold, Art is the solace of all sorrow. If I can only express my soul, I am comforted.’ Mr. Tickle looked interested.

‘Sit down, Mr. Chick, sit down,’ he said, taking his feet off the footstool. Mr. Chick sat down on it. ‘How would you express gout, Mr. Chick?’ asked Mr. Tickle.

‘Easy!’ said Mr. Chick. He drew his bow across the strings and the fiddle gave a fearful screech.

‘Ow!’ cried Mr. Tickle, grasping his leg, ‘that’s just the way it feels!’



Wonderful! I never heard a sound so much like gout in my life, but it does not seem to comfort me! Don't do it again!

Mr. Chick looked pleased with this tribute. 'That's Art,' he said. 'It can express anything! Would you like, sir, to have me express something else now? Say boils, for instance, or a touch of earache?'

He had his bow on the strings ready to oblige, but Mr. Tickle roared 'No' so alarmingly that Mr. Chick instantly began to play a lullaby to soothe him.

'Stop that, too!' cried Mr. Tickle, 'my foot's going to sleep!'

For a moment Mr. Chick was almost in despair, but then a bright thought struck him and he began to play 'We'll drive dull care away.' Almost at once Mr. Tickle's features relaxed into a benevolent smile.

Then Mr. Chick slid gradually into 'Money Musk,' and what was his surprise to see Mr. Tickle pick up his crutches and begin to caper about the room!

'Mr. Tickle certainly has a soul for Art,' thought Mr. Chick to himself. 'I have rarely seen any one so moved!'



Mr. Chick was scraping away on his fiddle at such a rate, Mr. Tickle's crutches were making such a noise tap, tap, tapping on the floor in time to the music, that neither one of them heard a rap at the door. Then suddenly the door opened and there were all the orphans gazing at Mr. Tickle with their eyes nearly popping out of their heads with amazement, but Mr. Chick kept right on playing 'Money Musk,' and in another moment the little children had taken off their spectacles and were dancing about Mr. Tickle. Even the Stomach-Aches forgot their troubles for a few minutes. Amaryllis, Christobel, and the older boys stood looking on speechless with surprise.

'What would Dr. Snipes say to *this*?' said Amaryllis to Christobel, but Christobel did not answer. She merely snapped her fingers, and as for Seven, at the mere mention of Dr. Snipes's name, he ran out his tongue. Not being an artist, Seven often expressed his soul in that way.



When the music stopped, the dancing stopped too, and the orphans scuttled out of sight. Mr. Tickle sat down in his chair.

‘Well, my good man,’ he said to Mr. Chick, ‘there’s certainly magic in your fiddle! I haven’t felt so lively since I first had gout. But I was always easily moved by Art! My mother told me that even in infancy I wept when my father played the concertina. Sometimes she wept too. I suppose I take after her. We were as a family devoted to Art. My father played the concertina and my sainted mother painted scenes. She ornamented many humble utensils in that way, and turned them into Works of Art. That frying-pan which you see hanging there was painted by her own hand,’ he said, wiping a tear from his eye. ‘Roses, you see. A pretty sentiment. A very pretty sentiment. I have a butter-bowl done in smilax, too. It certainly is pleasant to find some one who loves Art. I could never mention it to Dr. Snipes, for instance.’

‘Dr. Snipes has no soul for Art,’ said Mr. Chick.

‘How true,’ murmured Mr. Tickle.



Just then there was a knock at the door. 'Come in,' said Mr. Tickle. Amaryllis, the Stomach-Aches and Number Three came in.

Mr. Tickle gazed at them benevolently. 'Well, my dears, what is it?' he said.

'If you pleathe, thir, we are hungry,' said Four.

'To be sure, to be sure, to be sure,' said Mr. Tickle. 'Yes, indeed — quite so.' He thought a moment. 'In that case,' he said at last, 'I would suggest food.'

'But,' wailed Four, 'the cook has left!'

'To be sure, to be sure,' said Mr. Tickle. 'So Dr. Snipes said. He thought it was a good thing. He said she had no System.'

'But who will feed us?' said Four.

'Who indeed?' said Mr. Tickle, looking puzzled.

'Ah — ah — ah —' wailed the orphans.

'Oh, dear me, dear me!' sighed Mr. Tickle. Then he brightened. 'Ask Mr. Chick,' he said.



Mr. Chick hastily tiptoed out of the room.

‘What shall I do! What shall I do!’ he said to Solomon who was waiting for him outside Mr. Tickle’s door.

Solomon looked worried. He cocked his head on one side, then pricked up his ears, and ran straight to the basket of toys.

Mr. Chick opened the door and Solomon went into the room and set the basket down on the floor before the orphans.

Instantly their wails ceased; Mr. Chick peeped in to see what the silence was about. There sat Solomon looking pleased. All of the orphans were down on the floor beside him, their hunger forgotten as they gazed eagerly at the jumping jack which Amaryllis had found.

‘Oh, why am I an Artist!’ groaned Mr. Chick to himself. ‘Why was I not born a cook! We may live without Art, but not without food. Alas — alack — and well-a-day —’ He was just on the point of bursting into poetry again when suddenly he had a thought.



He whistled to Solomon. Solomon answered with a bark, and immediately dashed out of the room leaving the orphans playing with the toys. He found Mr. Chick already running up the road in the direction of Mrs. Pullet's house. Solomon ran with him barking joyfully.

They found Mrs. Pullet feeding her geese.

She saw them coming and went to meet them with her pan in her hand. The geese followed her.

'Lawk-a-mercy-me! Whatever can the matter be?' asked Mrs. Pullet as Mr. Chick stopped in front of her quite out of breath. Solomon sat upon his hind legs beside Mr. Chick and begged.

'Matter enough!' gasped Mr. Chick. 'Didn't you say to me once that you were an orphan cook and it was queer and lonesome with neither chick nor child to cook for?'

'I did so,' said Mrs. Pullet.

'Then,' said Mr. Chick, 'here's your chance, ma'am. I'm your Chick, and there are ten orphan children at Mr. Tickle's all hungry and with nothing to eat! The cook has left!'



'Lawk-a-mercy-me!' cried Mrs. Pullet. She set her pan down on the ground and started up the road immediately at such a pace that Mr. Chick could scarcely keep up with her.

When they reached the house, Mr. Chick took her at once to Mr. Tickle's room.

'Mr. Tickle,' said Mr. Chick, 'this is the new cook, Mrs. Pullet.'

'Ah—hum,' said Mr. Tickle, 'just so. How d'ye do?'

Mrs. Pullet dropped a curtsy. 'Your service, sir,' she said.

'Ah—hum,' said Mr. Tickle. He relapsed into thought. After a moment he said, 'Ah, yes. Now I have it! Are you, Mrs. Pullet, by any chance a mother?'

'Niver a bit, sir,' answered Mrs. Pullet, 'neither chick nor child.'

Mr. Tickle waved his hand. 'Ah,' he said, 'so much the better. Dr. Snipes says **they are very inefficient as a class. They lack System.**'

'He does, does he!' said Mrs. Pullet. 'The spalpeen! Going back like that on the mother that bore him, God help her! May he get as few blessings as he deserves! And now, sir, it's gone four already and I hear them poor little lambs a-bleatin', and why not, indeed, when they've nothing whatever inside of them! So I'll just be stirrin' up some supper if it's all the same to you, sir, and listen to your observations another time.'



She did not wait for an answer. She bobbed another curtsy and hurried out of the room leaving Mr. Tickle with his mouth open thinking what to say and Mr. Chick waiting for him to say it.

She found all the orphans in the hall. They must have been listening at the door, for they all knew she was the new cook.

'If you'll be showin' me the way to the kitchen now,' said Mrs. Pullet, 'I'll get you some supper, and the child that does be helpin' me the best gets a cakeen.'

'I'll help you! I'll help you!' shouted the orphans.

'Aw, she just says that to get you to work,' whispered Seven to Nine. 'Dr. Snipes will never let her give us cake. He says it's unwholesome.'

'If you say that again I'll punch your head,' said Nine.

All the orphans escorted Mrs. Pullet to the kitchen.



Five minutes after she got into the kitchen, Mrs. Pullet was mixing gingerbread in the big cake-bowl with all the orphans looking on.

‘Get along with you now!’ cried Mrs. Pullet, ‘or you’ll be putting a spell on the cake the way you’re watching it with the goggles on you, looking for all the world like a nest full of owls! Whatever do you wear them for at all?’

‘Dr. Snipes makes us!’ chorused the orphans. ‘He says that we must all wear them sometime, why not now,’ added Amaryllis.

‘I suppose he does be wearing them himself then?’ said Mrs. Pullet beating the cake very hard.

‘No!’ shouted the orphans.

‘Lawk-a-mercy-me!’ said Mrs. Pullet. ‘Likely he laid them off for to rest his eyes, and by the same token do you be restin’ yours a bit. Lay the goggles on the shelf there. Then the boys can bring in wood for the oven, and the girls can be settin’ the table for me.’



The orphans ran to the pantry shelf and laid their glasses there all in a row. Then the boys began to bring in wood with all their might and main. Solomon carried a stick at the head of the procession.

Mrs. Pullet stopped, on her way to put the cakeens in the oven, to speak to Mr. Chick.

‘Look at them now!’ she cried, ‘workin’ away like soldiers themselves. Ah, it’s the light heart that best carries the load, I’m tellin’ you.’

‘You never spoke a truer word, Mrs. Pullet, ma’am,’ said Mr. Chick.

‘Get your fiddle now,’ said Mrs. Pullet, ‘and give them a bit of a jig to march by.’

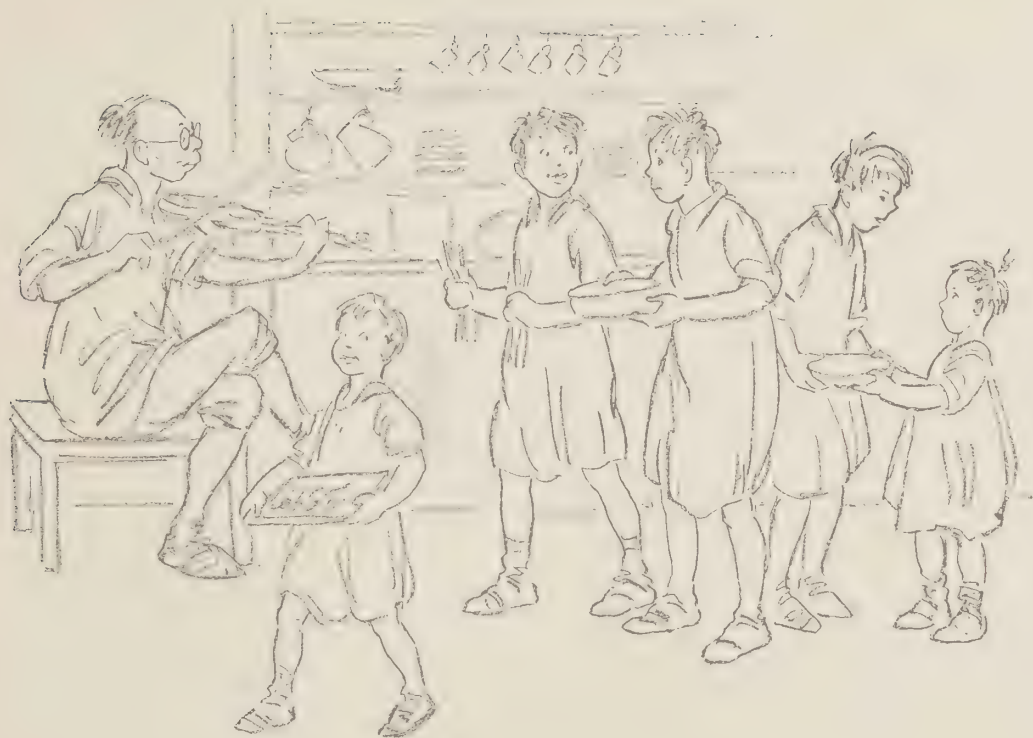


Mr. Chick ran at once for his fiddle, and soon the whole house echoed with the sound of marching feet, as the girls set the table and the boys piled the woodbox high with sticks. And such smells as came out of that kitchen! Mr. Tickle got whiffs of them in his room and sat up in his chair and sniffed. 'M -m,' he said, 'gingerbread, I do believe.' In another minute he came tap-tapping out to the kitchen himself.

There sat Mr. Chick playing away for dear life, and on the kitchen table twelve round cakes and twelve gingerbread rabbits with raisin eyes were lying all in a row.

Mr. Chick stopped playing to gaze at them and Mr. Tickle openly smacked his lips, while the orphans could hardly keep their hands from touching them.

Mrs. Pullet shook her finger at them — 'Neither bite nor sup until your hands are washed and your hair combed,' she said. Away scampered the orphans, and in two minutes were back again with their hair dripping, and water running down their cheeks in streams. They must have just dipped their heads in the bowl and smacked down their hair with their hands!

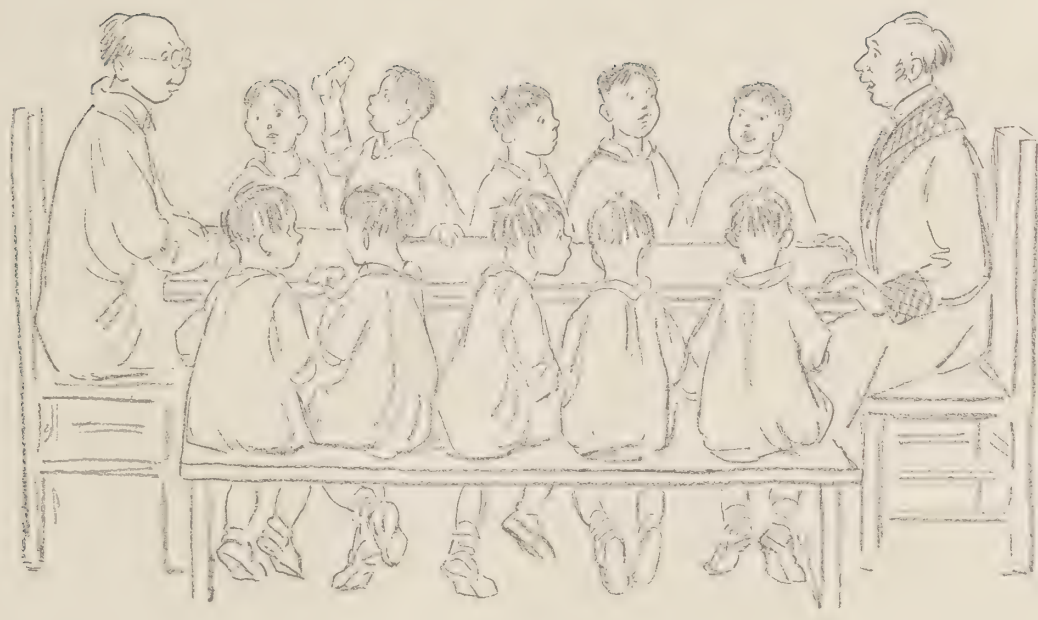


‘Lawk-a-mercy-me!’ cried Mrs. Pullet. ‘The luck is with you that you didn’t drown yourselves! But you’ve all been as good children as ever I saw in life, and you may pick your own cakeens. The round ones are the biggest. Sorrow a bit of them do you bite, though, until you’ve had all the rest of your supper! Mind that!’

Mr. Tickle had just taken a gingerbread rabbit in his hand and his mouth was already open to take a bite when she said this. He put the rabbit back on the table at once and pretended he had only opened his mouth to cough. It was not a very good cough. ‘Hem, hem,’ he said, and covered his mouth with his hand. Then he said to Mrs. Pullet, ‘I think, ma’am, I will eat my dinner here with the children instead of alone in my room. Mr. Chick, will you sit at the other end of the table?’

‘Thank you, sir,’ said Mr. Chick.

They had fried chicken and baked potatoes and apple jelly and the cakeens for dessert.



When supper was over and the kitchen in order again Mrs. Pullet said to the orphans, 'Now, dears, I must go home.' At this all the orphans set up such a howl that Solomon came bounding in to see what was the matter.

'Don't go! — Don't go!' wailed the orphans.

Mrs. Pullet laughed. 'If you're wanting me to stay,' she said, 'do you be runnin' away with yourselves to bed this instant minute and never let another peep out of you until the dawn of day. I'll come back in the morning and if so be I see clean hands and faces on you, I'll make muffins for your breakfast.'

The orphans clapped their hands over their mouths and started at once for bed. 'And there'll be honey on the muffins, I make no doubt,' Mrs. Pullet called after them. When they were gone, she said good-night to Mr. Tickle and Mr. Chick and set forth in the moonlight up the road toward her own little cabin.



Solomon walked politely with Mrs. Pullet to her house.

When he came back he found Mr. Tickle and Mr. Chick sitting beside the fire in great content. Mr. Tickle was dozing, and Mr. Chick now and then drew his bow across the fiddle strings and little tunes fluttered about the room like wandering butterflies.

Solomon lay down on the hearth, put his nose on his paws, and heaved a great sigh. 'Here's where I get some rest, too,' he thought to himself, but he had no more than closed his eyes than he opened them again.

There in the door stood Dr. Snipes!

Mr. Chick put down his fiddle, Mr. Tickle sat up and blinked.

'Don't rise, don't rise,' said Dr. Snipes, waving his hand. 'I just dropped in to see if you need any advice.'

'Yes — no — not at all, very well, thank you,' murmured Mr. Tickle nervously, 'or at least — just so!'

Mr. Chick said nothing. Solomon growled. Mr. Chick nudged him to make him keep still.



'Now, my dear Chick,' said Dr. Snipes briskly, 'I will just take a look about. How about the orphans? Any new symptoms?' He led the way to the pantry.

'They seem quite happy, I should say,' faltered Mr. Chick.

'Ah,' said Dr. Snipes, frowning slightly, 'Adolescent Hysteria, more than likely. I must look into that.' He took out a notebook, made a note in it, and put it back in his pocket. 'Never trust the memory,' he said, 'most inefficient. Keep a notebook and jot things down.'

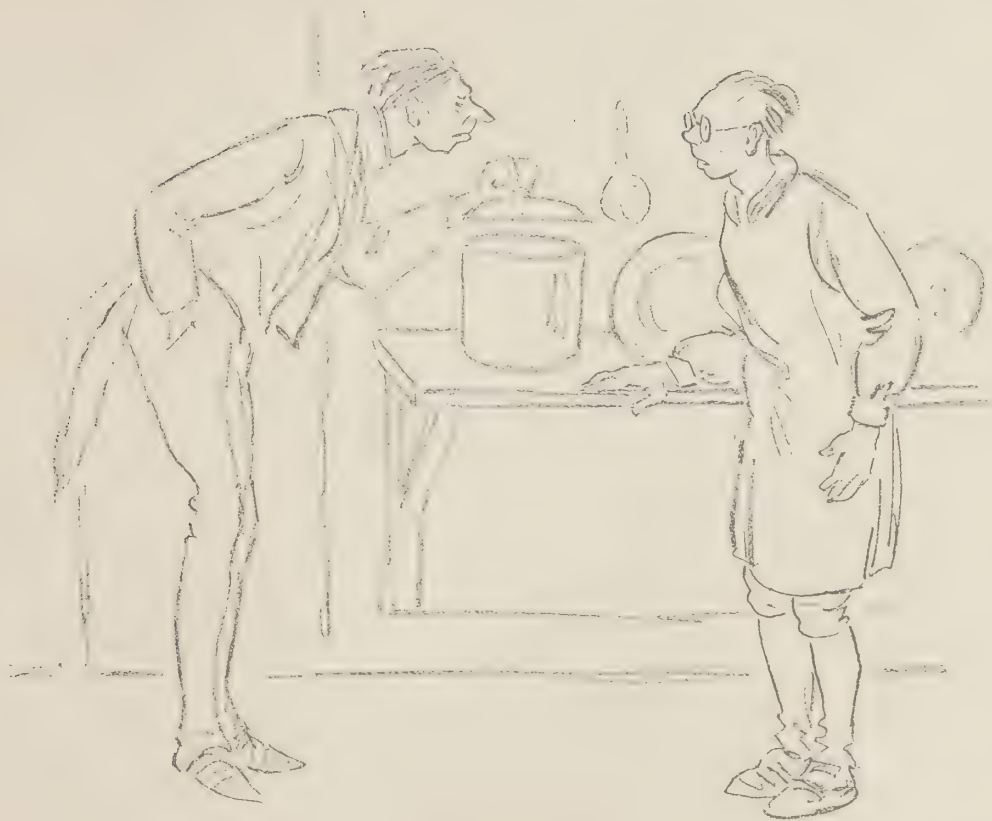
Then he put his finger on his nose. 'What do I smell?' he said. 'Surely not cake!' He sniffed suspiciously. 'Most unwholesome!' Mr. Chick sniffed too.

'Ah — ah — we have a new cook,' said Mr. Chick. 'I should have told you.'

Dr. Snipes lifted the cover of the cake-jar, and looked inside, but there was nothing in it. The orphans had eaten every single crumb. There was nothing left but the smell. **He put the cover on again.**

'So you have a new cook,' he said, and taking out his notebook he wrote, 'New Cook, Tickle's,' at the top of a page. 'Now,' he said, 'tell me. Does she know anything about scientific cookery?' Mr. Chick looked blank. 'Have you, for instance, heard her mention calories, or proteids, or vitamins?'

'Never once, sir,' said Mr. Chick firmly. 'She says nothing that the most innocent child might not hear!'



Then Dr. Snipes caught sight of all the spectacles lying in a row, and his face beamed. 'Ah,' he said. 'Now that is something like System! Excellent! Excellent! All their glasses put in a row on the shelf when they go to bed! A place for everything, and everything in that place, that's my motto, if I may coin a phrase. I felt sure I could rely on you, Chick. Now I'll take a look at the orphans themselves.'

Dr. Snipes talked all the way upstairs, and Solomon who went with them barked three times, yet, in spite of the noise when they reached the rooms where the orphans slept, every single one of them was sound asleep with his eyes squeezed tight shut! Seven even snored a little!

'Ah,' said Dr. Snipes, 'very good - very good.' He took out his notebook. 'Did they say their prayers?' he asked.

'I don't know,' said Mr. Chick.

Dr. Snipes wrote 'prayers' in his book. 'I must look into that,' he said.

Then they went downstairs. Mr. Tickle had been dozing again, but he woke up when they came in.



'Now, my dear Tickle,' said Dr. Snipes, seating himself on a stool in front of him, 'a word with you, if you please.'

'By all means! Just so!' said Mr. Tickle.

Dr. Snipes lifted his finger and waved it at Mr. Tickle. 'My dear sir,' said he, 'a great chance lies before you. Opportunity knocks at your door, if I may coin a phrase.'

'What's that?' said Mr. Tickle. 'I didn't hear any knock.'

'What I mean is,' said Dr. Snipes, 'you have the one chance of your life to make your name known through the ages as a Patron of Science! You see, sir, you are unusually blest in having orphans instead of children of your own.'

'Ah, yes, to be sure,' said Mr. Tickle. 'Just so. But *why?*'

'Because,' said Dr. Snipes, 'there are many scientific problems to be solved and parents nearly always show an ignorant dislike of having their children used for experiment. Orphans are not so handicapped. You have the orphans. You have Me. The eyes of the world are upon us.'

'Yes, yes, go on!' said Mr. Tickle.



Dr. Snipes went on. 'The time will come,' he said, 'when every scientist will be furnished with an Orphan Asylum where he may practice without being bothered by parents. At present I am the only man of great reputation who has one. The name of Tickle, my dear sir, will, without doubt, go thundering down the ages. "Tickle, the Patron of Science. Tickle, the friend of Dr. Snipes" – so will your name be known!' He wiped a tear from his eye. Mr. Tickle hunted through his pockets for a handkerchief, but did not find one.

'No wonder you are moved, sir,' said Dr. Snipes. 'Here, take mine.' He handed his handkerchief to Mr. Tickle.

'So many new ideas keep coming to me!' cried Dr. Snipes, waving his arms. 'The orphans shall have the benefit of them all! They shall have their dreams read, and their minds measured! They shall learn to eat calories! They shall be inoculated for everything and all have their appendixes cut out. Ah, sir – a glorious prospect opens before them, if I may coin a phrase.'



He rose, shook Mr. Tickle warmly by the hand, said good-night to Mr. Chick, and in another moment was striding up the road with his medicine-case in his hand, and his coat tails flying out behind him.

'A wonderful man, Dr. Snipes,' said Mr. Tickle to Mr. Chick when he was gone.

'Extraordinary,' said Mr. Chick.

'And Mrs. Pullet,' said Mr. Tickle smiling benevolently, 'an excellent woman that! Such gingerbread! Did you, Mr. Chick, by any chance, ever taste better?' 'Never, sir, upon my honor!' cried Mr. Chick.

'And did you, Mr. Chick, understand her to say muffins for breakfast?'

'*With* honey!' said Mr. Chick.

'Ah, yes, with honey. Just so. To be sure!' said Mr. Tickle. 'Good-night, Mr. Chick.' 'Good-night, sir,' said Mr. Chick.

Then Mr. Tickle went tap-tapping down the hall to his room, and Mr. Chick sat down again before the fire with Solomon by his side.

'It's been a long day, Solomon,' said Mr. Chick, 'but we've found the place we were looking for! Here are children who relish toys and a bit of jig now and again—and you and Mrs. Pullet and I—Solomon—we three will see to it that they get them.' 'Bow-wow,' said Solomon. Mr. Chick drew his bow softly across the fiddle-strings, and Mr. Tickle in his room fell asleep listening to the strains of 'Money Musk.'











